Media Release

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France goes *En Marche* to top the *Soft Power 30* rankings, as Anglo-American domination falters

- Bolstered by a pair of resounding election victories for a globally-minded Emmanuel Macron and his En Marche party, France has shot to the top of Portland's annual *Soft Power 30* rankings, leaping Canada, Germany, USA, and UK to claim the top spot.
- A combination of strong objectively measured soft power assets and a more favourable global public opinion of France sees the Republic make big gains in its stocks of soft power.
- Conversely, the new Trump administration has proven to be a drag on American soft power, as global public opinion on the US has soured.
- As "America First" translates to less global leadership from the US, China is taking up the mantel of champion for globalisation and even environmentalism, and its ranking has jumped three places to 25.
- Brexit has dented Britain's soft power in Europe, but overall, it maintains its position as overall runner-up behind France.
- Download the full report at **http://softpower30.portland-communications.com/**

Tuesday 18 July: France has jumped three places to reach the top of the latest *Soft Power 30* Index, the definitive global ranking of soft power.

The 2017 report shows that France has capitalised on decreasing global favourability towards the United Kingdom and United States, both of which saw their overall scores fall.

The third edition of *The Soft Power 30* is being launched today by Portland, the strategic communications consultancy, in partnership with the University of Southern California Center on Public Diplomacy. The report, which uses a composite index to examine the relative strength of soft power assets at the disposal of nation states, also includes Germany and Canada in the top-5.

The results are below:

Rank	Country	Score	2016 Rank
1	FRANCE	75.75	5
2	UNITED KINGDOM	75.72	2
3	UNITED STATES	75.02	1
4	GERMANY	73.67	3
5	CANADA	72.90	4

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6	JAPAN	71.66	7
7	SWITZERLAND	70.45	8
8	AUSTRALIA	70.15	6
9	SWEDEN	69.32	9
10	NETHERLANDS	67.89	10

France's impressive move up the rankings has been driven by a combination of strong fundamental soft power resources that have always kept them in the top five of *The Soft Power 30* and a significant increase in favourability as measured by international polling from 25 countries.

Despite major terrorist attacks and the rise of far-right nationalist populism, the internationalist, business-friendly party of Emmanuel Macron has been handed a large mandate to lead France forwards after a period of political and social unrest. With a promise of increased global engagement and leadership, amplified around the world through incisive social media implementation, it is little wonder that France has risen four places in the overall polling scores, from 9th to 5th.

France's improved soft power performance is thanks to long-standing assets like its world-leading diplomatic network, the reach of its digital diplomacy channels, influence in multi-lateral organisations and global appeal of its cultural offering. Concerns of security have failed to dampen its tourism industry. France leads the world in international tourist arrivals, who come to enjoy the cuisine, museums and vibrant cities. Cultural production including film and music continue to flourish.

Despite seeing its overall score decrease, the UK finished as the runner up for the second year in a row. While the UK held on to second place, its overall score has slipped from 2016. Nearly a year on from the decision to leave the EU, overall favourability towards the UK has fallen, more so from its near neighbours in Europe.

For the moment, however, the UK's objectively-assessed soft power assets – both state-backed and privately run – remain strong. Resources such as the British Council and BBC World Service, internationally recognized brands like the Premier League and its world-leading creative and financial industries, provide the global reach and influence to draw audiences in.

Britain and France's drive for greater engagement, whether post-Brexit free trading or a rejuvenated push for EU integration, has contrasted starkly with President Trump's rhetoric around cutting of US diplomatic capabilities as part of the 'America First' approach.

The Trump administration seems to have brought on a fall in American soft power, not least due to the zero-sum nationalist rhetoric emanating from the White House and a mercurial approach to foreign policy marked by questioning the value of international alliances. This has corresponded with decreasing American performance in the international polling where the US's total score fell nearly 10% from 2016 to 2017.

Other key findings for the 2017 Soft Power Index include:

- Despite Germany falling one place, most European countries improved or held their position in the rankings this year.
- Asian soft power continues to increase, with three out of the four Asian countries in the top-30 seeing their scores increase. China and Japan have moved up the rankings every year since our first *Soft Power 30* ranking coinciding with a growing willingness to provide global leadership in the face of US withdrawal.
- Australia's score remained stable, but this stagnation, combined with a rise in the scores of Japan and Switzerland, caused Australia to fall from 6th (where it's been for two years) to 8th.
- Brazil, the only Latin American representative in the index, has fallen five places, suggesting that the Rio Olympics failed to mask the deeper societal and economic issues the country faces. A number of other Latin American states linger just outside the top 30, showing there may be potential for the region to rise over the course of the next year.

Jonathan McClory, author of the report and General Manager of Portland's Singapore office said:

"This year's annual rankings of global soft power reflects the major global geopolitical shifts currently underway. At the top of the table, we can see the waning dominance of Anglo-American soft power as Brexit starts to bite and America First results in America Alone. At the same time, a more confident and unified Europe looks more attractive to the rest of the world. Likewise, Asia is continuing to translate its growing share of global economic output into soft power. China – while still in the bottom half of the table – made big gains in its march up the rankings as it moves to fill the global leadership vacuum left by the an America in retreat. With France – this year's winner boosted by a new pro-globalisation President – it seems the power of persuasion sits with the globalists, rather than the nationalists."

Joseph Nye, Harvard professor, originator of the term 'soft power' and author of the 2015 *Soft Power 30* foreword said:

"Under normal circumstances, soft power is a relatively stable asset. But these are not normal times. The results of this year's *Soft Power 30* reflect the changing balance of global influence. Europe has regained its confidence and Asian soft power is on the rise. At the same time, President Trump's drive to put 'America First' continues to undermine U.S. soft power. In combining both objective metrics and international polling data, *The Soft Power 30* provides a clear picture of how changes in leadership and emerging global trends are affecting the relative distribution of soft power and the comparative ability of countries to influence international affairs."

Jay Wang, Director of the USC Center on Public Diplomacy (CPD) and an Associate Professor at the USC Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism said:

"We are delighted to be part of this year's Soft Power 30 Report. Public diplomacy is more important than ever given the current challenges and opportunities in global affairs. Persuading people through attraction rather than force and coercion makes both moral and economic sense."

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About Portland:

Portland is a strategic communications consultancy working with governments, businesses, foundations, and non-governmental organisations to shape their stories and communicate them effectively to global audiences.

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About the USC Center on Public Diplomacy:

The USC Center on Public Diplomacy (CPD) was established in 2003 as a partnership between the Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism and the School of International Relations at the University of Southern California. It is a research, analysis and professional education organization dedicated to furthering the study and practice of global public engagement and cultural relations. For more information, visit CPD's website at www.uscpublicdiplomacy.org

About Soft Power 30:

- The *Soft Power 30* is a ranking of 30 countries around the world, based on a composite index that measures and compares the resources that account for a country's soft power;

- The index combines both objective data across six categories (Government, Culture, Education, Global Engagement, Enterprise, and Digital) and international polling, providing a comprehensive framework for the analysis of soft power;

- The *Soft Power 30* methodology is marked out by three innovative elements that make it the clearest picture to date of global soft power to date:

    1. The index contains a digital and digital diplomacy component, including anonymised data from Facebook, working with their data-science team to create and collect new metrics on countries' 'digital diplomacy';
    2. The index is the only study to combine objective data from a range of reputable sources with subjective data derived from international polling conducted in 25 different countries that provides coverage of every major region of the world;
    3. 75 metrics in total are normalised into comparable data and used to calculate a single score for each country that allow for an overall ranking of global soft power resources.

18 July 2017

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